

City of Saco

HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

2010



Main Street, Saco, Maine

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Prepared by: Sara K. Martin
Architectural Historian
75 Leighton Street
Bangor, ME 04401

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Cover postcard courtesy of Peter Morelli.

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INTRODUCTION

Saco's downtown residents and businesses built and maintained a beautiful downtown for generations before the City Council passed the city's Historic Preservation Ordinance and created the Downtown Historic Preservation District in 1991. These individual efforts over many decades have retained a diverse architectural tapestry of buildings from humble 1785 houses to nineteenth century churches and commercial blocks to a twentieth century art deco-influenced theaters and hamburger stands.

Recognizing the social and economic value of its beautiful downtown, the City Council codified local design standards in Saco's Historic Preservation Ordinance, which is included in Chapter 4 of the Zoning Ordinance. The *Historic District Guidelines* was created to help Saco residents understand the rules that govern the protection of buildings in Saco's historic district. The local regulations are based on the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. The ordinance creates the Saco Historic Preservation Commission, a volunteer city commission nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Similar to a Planning Board, the Commission makes decisions about proposals for building projects in historic districts by reviewing them to the standards of the ordinance.

*Main Street, Saco, postcard
courtesy Peter Morelli*



This manual outlines the policies and procedures followed by the Saco Historic Preservation Commission (Part 1) and provides an in-depth, illustrated explanation of "Saco's Standards of Evaluation" and the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* (Part 2). In addition, it contains a detailed, illustrated section of guidelines on how to meet the standards, based on the Secretary of the Interior's *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (Part 3).

The goal of the manual is to provide additional information for property owners, builders, designers, and anyone who needs to use the ordinance. The interpretive material is based on the federal and state governments' historic preservation practices and how the historic preservation community has interpreted standard's very similar to Saco's. The manual is advisory only.

Saco's architectural heritage draws from many sources, but much of the legacy flows from the textile mills which began to be built in 1826. This architectural legacy can be seen in the mill buildings themselves on Saco Island, which are now in the Biddeford/Saco Mills Historic District, and in the Saco Downtown Historic District, which are both on the National Register of Historic Places.

*Thornton Academy
Students in 1892,
photograph courtesy of
Dyer Library
Archives/Saco Museum*

The Saco Downtown Historic District contains civic and commercial buildings as well as residential, religious,



educational, and social buildings, extending from 1785 to 1946. The buildings encompass a broad range of architectural styles: Georgian and Federal styles of the turn of the nineteenth century; Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Second Empire

styles of the mid-nineteenth century; late-nineteenth century Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, and Stick Styles; Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Bungalow styles of the

early twentieth century; plus a few Modern commercial buildings of the mid-twentieth century.

These buildings and their relationship to each other help tell the story of Saco's development. That there are so many carefully-maintained buildings from so many different eras in Saco creates a strong sense of place in the city, making it a vibrant place to live and do business. The sensitive preservation of the town's historic features has both economic as well as aesthetic benefits.

In addition to helping to strengthen the local economy, historic preservation efforts benefit owners of historic properties, particularly if they live in a locally-designated historic preservation district. First, the design standards mandated by a local historic district ensure high-quality rehabilitation projects, which lead to generally higher property values of the district as a whole. Since individual property values are determined in part by the condition of nearby properties, the well-tended buildings ultimately create a more stable neighborhood and protect the property owner's investment.

Additional information about historic preservation in Saco and the history of Saco is available on the city's web site, at www.sacomaine.org, and on the web site of the Dyer Library-Saco Museum, www.sacomuseum.org.

*Garage on Storer Street,
undated photograph,
courtesy Dyer Library
Archives/Saco Museum*



PART 1: SACO'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE: WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

The Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance

The heritage and economic well-being of the city will be strengthened by preserving its architectural and historic setting, conserving property values in unique areas, fostering civic beauty, and promoting the use of historic or architecturally significant buildings for the education and welfare of the citizens of the City of Saco. The intent of this ordinance is to in every way possible assist property owners to maintain the architectural integrity of the district (Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance).

The Saco Zoning Ordinance Regarding Historic Preservation is the part of the City of Saco's Zoning Ordinance that is designed to protect the historic character of the town. The City of Saco is a Certified Local Government (CLG), which means that it has enacted a local historic preservation ordinance that created a local historic preservation commission and a review process for protecting the town's cultural resources. It is certified by the state and federal governments because it has met the program requirements of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the National Park Service. CLG status affirms that the City's historic preservation ordinance adheres to state and national standards, particularly the National Preservation Act and the Secretary of Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*. CLG status also qualifies the city to apply for grant funds specifically for historic preservation projects, such as conducting architectural and archaeological surveys; preparing National Register of Historic Places nominations; carrying out education programs; and managing preservation, rehabilitation and restoration projects. Saco is one of nine CLGs in Maine.



Saco City Hall on Main Street is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The City of Saco created the Historic Preservation Ordinance to preserve historic buildings within Saco's historic districts. The Ordinance covers (1) locally-designated historic sites and landmarks and (2) buildings, structures, sites, and objects that are located in a locally-designated historic district. The Saco

Historic Preservation Ordinance codifies the means to help sustain Saco's architectural and historic character, thus promoting the city's economy and sense of community. The intention of Saco's historic preservation ordinance is to:

1. Protect, preserve and enhance the outward appearance and architectural features of structures within designated districts or designated sites or landmarks;
2. Prevent the demolition or removal of significant historic buildings or structures within historic districts or designated sites or landmarks;
3. Preserve, protect and enhance the essential character of historic districts by protecting relationships of groups of buildings and structures;
4. Accept new buildings and structures in historic districts that are designed and built in a manner that is compatible with the character of the district;
5. Promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the people of Saco (Saco Historic Preservation ordinance).

Certificate of Appropriateness (COA): A document issued by the Saco Historic Preservation Commission that assures compliance with the provisions of the Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance (section 413). A Certificate of Appropriateness must be issued for most work on buildings in the historic district.

The first four measures—protecting the exterior appearance of individual historic landmarks and sites and those within a historic district; preventing the demolition of historic properties; protecting the relationships between historic buildings; and accepting compatible new buildings and structures within a historic district—form the basis for assessing applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The Ordinance expands on these basic tenets by providing ten standards for evaluating applications for a COA (called “Standards of Evaluation”). These standards are based on the “Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.” These are federal standards that allow for sensitive alterations while preserving the architectural character of the structure. They are accompanied by guidelines for meeting the Standards. (Each standard is explored in detail in this manual in Part 2, “Standards of Evaluation.”)

Saco's historic preservation ordinance also provides a list of ten Visual Compatibility Factors that ensure that any rehabilitation project or new construction within a historic district is visually related to the surrounding buildings. Moreover, the ordinance contains four standards for evaluating contemporary signage

within the historic district. (These standards will also be discussed in Part 2.)

In addition to outlining the standards that the Saco Historic Preservation Commission (the Commission) uses to evaluate project proposals, the Historic Preservation Ordinance establishes the Commission as a municipal body and stipulates the Commissioners' terms of service as well as their duties. It also establishes qualifications and procedures for establishing historic districts, historic sites, and historic landmarks. Further, it describes the existing historic district(s), outlines activities requiring a COA, details the application procedure to obtain a COA, explains the appeals process, and spells out the administration and enforcement of the Commission's decisions. The ordinance also includes a list of definitions, which this manual follows.



The Thacher-Goodale House, 1828, 121 North Street, Saco, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Properties

Properties can be designated by the federal government or by local communities at the local, state, and national level. A building, structure or site recognized by the federal government is placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Listing in the National Register is a great honor, but it does not necessarily confer any legal protections to the property if its owner chooses to alter it. However, if a local community designates a property as historic, the property owner has to abide by the legal restrictions (such as a preservation ordinance) enacted by that community.

Buildings and sites can be recognized as individual historic places or as part of a group of buildings and landscapes, such as in a historic district. Historic districts, like individual buildings and structures, can be designated by the federal government or by local municipalities.

Locally-designated properties in Saco

The Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance designates both individually-listed properties and historic districts. The ordinance defines a historic district as “a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or landmarks united by past events or aesthetically by plan or by physical development. . . . Such historic districts may also comprise individual elements separated geographically, but linked by association or history.” (Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance).

*A historic district can include buildings that do not add to the historic character of the district, either because they have been built too recently (generally within the past fifty years); they fall outside of the period of significance; they do not meet the standards set forth in the Historic Preservation Ordinance; or they have lost integrity. Changes to these **non-contributing** properties, however, are evaluated by the Saco Historic Preservation Commission because any alterations to them could affect the overall quality of the historic district.*

The Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance uses the following criteria to designate historic landmarks, sites and districts, which are based in part on National Register of Historic Places criteria:

1. **History:** The property or district is associated with events that are important to the history of Saco and the nation, including broad patterns of cultural, political, economic, military, social or sociological history.
2. **Persons:** The property or district is associated with a notable historic person or persons.
3. **Ideas:** The property or district is associated with important historic examples of a great idea or ideal.
4. **Architecture:** The property or district contains structures or structural remains that are a good representation of architecture valuable for study of a period, style, or method of building construction, community organization and living, or landscaping or it is a notable structure or site representing the work of a master builder, designer, architect or landscape architect.
5. **Visual Continuity:** The property contributes to the visual continuity of a historic district.
6. **National Register of Historic Places:** The property is listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or as a National Historic Landmark (City of Saco 2007).

Locally-designated properties in Saco include the Saco Downtown Historic District (see map on page 9) and the Biddeford/Saco Mills Historic District, which is partly in Biddeford.

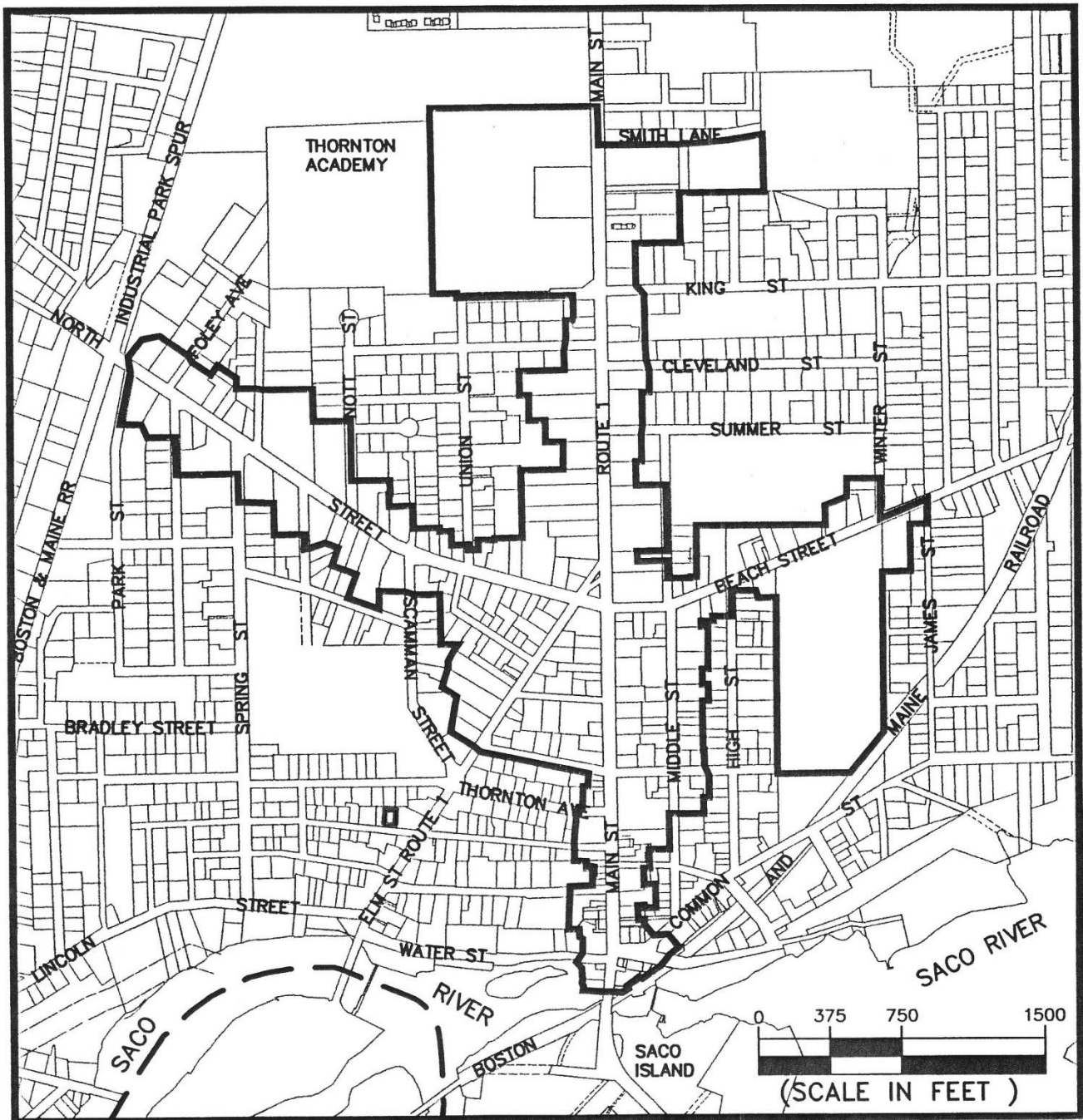


Figure 1. The Saco Downtown Historic District. Map courtesy of the City of Saco Planning and Economic Development Department.



A mill building on Saco Island

National Register of Historic Places: Listings in Saco

<i>Property</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Date Listed</i>
Thacher-Goodale House (1828)	121 North Street	11/21/1976
A. B. Seavey House (1890)	90 Temple Street	3/31/1978
Saco City Hall (1855)	300 Main Street	10/9/1979
J. G. Deering House (Dyer Library)(1869)	371 Main Street	2/17/1982
Jacobs Houses and Store (1820-26)	9-17 Elm Street	3/2/1982
Saco High School (former)(1871-72)	Spring Street	7/14/1983
Grant Family House (1810)	72 Grant Road	6/21/1990
Way Way General Store (1927-29)	93 Buxton Road	12/14/1995
Saco Downtown Historic District	Roughly bounded by Elm, North, Beach & Main Streets	6/12/1998
Biddeford/Saco Mills Historic District	Saco Island & Biddeford	12/30/2008

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the list of places that are considered significant by the United States government. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established the National Register as an inventory of the nation's cultural resources. The National Park Service, which is part of the U. S. Department of the Interior, administers the National Register.

The National Register confers national recognition to properties that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The properties can be important to a community, to a state, or to the nation. Properties on the National Register must meet high standards for integrity and historic significance. Inclusion in the National Register may make income-producing properties eligible for Federal and State of Maine tax benefits; enables federal, state and local agencies to take historic preservation into consideration when planning projects; requires review of federally-funded, licensed, or sponsored projects that may affect historic properties; and may make the property eligible for grants for historic preservation projects.



The J. G. Deering House (1869), now the Dyer Library, is on the National Register. Photograph courtesy of the Dyer Library Archives/Saco Museum.

Listing in the National Register of Historic Places is a great distinction. However, it does not in itself prevent the alteration or even the demolition of a property and it does not automatically lead to historic zoning. It provides protection when the federal government carries out projects or when federal funds are involved. Local ordinances also offer legal protection to historically-significant properties.

The National Register of Historic Places includes individually-listed buildings and historic districts.

A *building*, as defined by the National Register, was “created principally to shelter any form of human activity. ‘Building’ may also be used to refer to a historically and functionally related unit, such as a courthouse and jail or a house and barn.” (National Register of Historic Places 2002) Examples of buildings are schools, town halls, garages, and forts. The Thacher-Goodale House and Saco City Hall are examples of buildings in Saco on the National Register. There are eight individually-listed buildings on the National Register in Saco (listed on page 10).

A *district* “possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.” (National Register of Historic Places 2002) Examples of districts are residential areas, rural villages, business districts, and college campuses. Historic districts can contain buildings and structures that contribute to the historic character of the district

Contributing structure: In a historic district, a building that contributes to the character of that district.

Non-contributing structure: In an historic district, a building that does not contribute to the historic or architectural character of the district.

and those that do not contribute to the character of the historic district. Saco has two National Register historic districts: the Saco Historic District and the Biddeford/Saco Mill Historic District, which is partly in Biddeford.

The National Park Service uses four criteria for evaluating which properties should be listed in the National Register.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with **events** that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of significant **persons** in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a **type, period, or method of construction**, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, **information** important in history or prehistory (National Register of Historic Places 1997).

National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant properties that exemplify important aspects of the nation's history, architecture, engineering or culture. There are forty-one National Historic Landmarks in Maine and fewer than 2,500 in the United States. All National Historic Landmarks are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Saco's ordinance allows for locally-designated landmarks, which should not be confused with National Historic Landmarks.

Saco Historic Preservation Commission

The Saco Historic Preservation Commission is a city commission established by the Historic Preservation Section of the Saco Zoning Ordinance. It is comprised of five regular members and five associate members. The mayor of Saco

nominates the Commissioners, who are then approved by the City Council. The Commissioners must be residents of the City of Saco and must have the interest, knowledge, ability, experience and desire to promote historic preservation in Saco. Members of the Commission should have skills related to historic preservation, such as architectural design skills or a



Main Street in Saco, ca. 1910s. Photograph courtesy of the Dyer Library Archives/Saco Museum.

background in history, architectural history, landscape architecture, planning, engineering, law, archeology or building construction, to the extent that they are available in the community. The Commission should include a member of the Saco Historical Society. At least one associate member should be a resident of the Saco Historic District. Associate members only vote if the Chairperson of the Commission appoints them to serve in the place of an absent regular member. Both regular and associate members serve for a period of three years. Both

Regular and associate members are volunteers. The Saco City Council may also appoint advisory members to serve in a consultant or advisory role to the Commission. Advisory members do not necessarily need to be residents of Saco. (For more details about terms of service, Commission vacancies, and other information about the Saco Historic Preservation Commission, please see the Historic Preservation section of the Saco Zoning Ordinance, §413-3.)

Duties of the Saco Historic Preservation Commission

The Saco Historic Preservation Commission was established to ensure the good stewardship of Saco's historic properties. The following is a detailed list of the Commission's duties and powers as specified in the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

1. Educate property owners and City officials about the physical and financial aspects of the preservation, renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, structures and sites.
2. Educate and advise property owners about the requirements of complying with the Historic Preservation Ordinance.
3. Make recommendations for establishing historic districts, historic sites or historic landmarks.

4. Review all proposed changes to designated historic sites, historic landmarks or properties within historic districts, including proposed new construction, removal or demolition.
5. Review all proposed National Register nominations in Saco.
6. Advise City officials regarding local historical and cultural resources and act as a liaison between the City government and those persons and organizations concerned with preserving Saco's historic buildings and landscapes.
7. Conduct continuing surveys of historic and cultural resources in Saco in accordance with the guidelines of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.
8. Provide ongoing education to local citizens about historic preservation issues.
9. Undertake other efforts to advance the protection of historic and cultural resources within Saco.
10. Cooperate with Federal, State and City officials to pursue the objectives of historic preservation.
11. Participate in land use planning efforts of the City, State and Federal Government. (City of Saco 2007)

Saco Historic Preservation Commission Meetings

All meetings of the Saco Historic Preservation Commission will be open to the public. All meetings will be publically announced and an agenda will be available prior to the meeting. A chairperson presides over meetings—the chairperson and vice chairperson are elected annually from among the regular members. A quorum of four Commissioners must be present to conduct the business of the meeting.

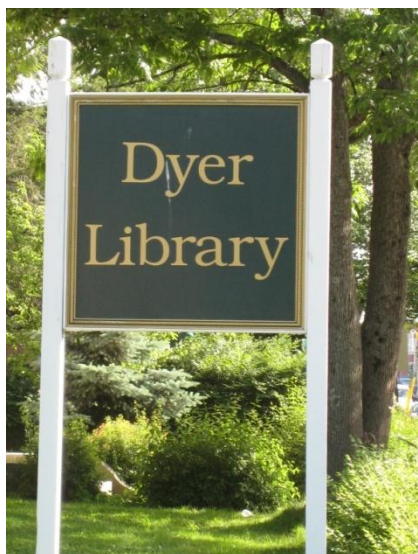
Visible from a public way: Any alterations to a historic landmark, historic site or historic district that can be seen from any public sidewalk, road, path, street or highway.

Obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness

The Saco Historic Preservation Commission issues a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for projects that comply with the Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance. The owner (or his or her agent) of a historic landmark, a historic site, or a property within a historic district needs to obtain a COA for any change in the exterior appearance of the property that is visible from a public way. If a project requires a COA and also requires a building permit, the property owner must obtain the COA before receiving a building permit. A property owner needs to obtain a COA from the Commission for any of the following activities:

1. Any alterations, additions, or reconstruction to a historic landmark or a building within a historic district or on a historic site where the addition would be clearly visible from a public way. This includes adding porches and steps to existing buildings.

2. New construction of a building in a historic district or on a historic site that is visible from a public way. The new construction can be a principal building or an accessory building.
3. Demolition of a historic landmark or a contributing building in a historic district. This includes the demolition of any portion of a building, including removing architectural features, from a historic landmark or a contributing building in a historic district.
4. Moving a historic landmark or any building located in a historic district.
5. Placing new signs in a historic district, a historic site, or a historic landmark.
6. New construction of walls, fences and parking lots in a historic district that are within 75 feet of, and clearly visible from, a public way.
7. Sandblasting brick or stone buildings.



A sign on Main Street in Saco's Historic District

Activities that do not require a COA:

- The ordinary maintenance and repair of exterior features of a historic site, a historic landmark, or a property within a historic district as long as that repair does not entail a change in design, material or outward appearance.
- Changes in paint color.
- The construction of legally-required ramps for access by the disabled.
- Any changes that the chief Code Enforcement Officer determines are necessary because of safety concerns about a building or its occupants.

Applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness

The application: To apply for a COA, a property owner submits an application to the City of Saco Planning Department, which then forwards the application to the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission then considers the application at a public hearing within twenty-one days. The City informs the applicant of the date of the public hearing and mails a notice of the hearing to abutting property owners. A hearing notice and an agenda is posted at City Hall at least five days prior to the public hearing. If the application is for a new building, an

addition of over \$1,000 in estimated value, or to demolish a building, a notice of the hearing will also be placed in a general education newspaper. The property owner(s) should attend the meeting or send a representative. (Information about what the application should include can be found in the text box on page 17).

Minor or temporary alterations: Saco's Planning Department will review minor or temporary proposed changes to a historic landmark, a historic site, or a property in a historic district, including the installation or alteration of exterior signs, to handle such requests more efficiently. A *minor* alteration is one in which significant architectural features will not be substantially changed, removed, or obscured. The Planning Department will not classify an alteration as minor if the proposed change will affect the historic character of the building or site. A *temporary* alteration is a one-time change that does not exceed thirty days or an annual occurrence that does not exceed a thirty-day period each year.

The Planning Department will review the COA application for minor or temporary alterations and come to a decision within ten working days of receiving an application. Since the application will not appear before the Saco Historic Preservation Commission, a public hearing will not be held and notices will not be sent to abutters of the property. The Planning Department uses the Standards of Evaluation outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance to approve the application, approve it with modifications, or deny it. The applicant may have the application for the COA reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission if the department has not made a determination within ten working days or if the applicant is not satisfied with the Planning Department's determination.



*The Grant Farm (1810)
on Grant Road in Saco
was listed on the
National Register in
1990. Photograph
courtesy of Roxanne
Eflin.*

*A Saco Historic Preservation Commission
Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) should include:*

1. The applicant's name, address, and interest in the property. If not representing the property owner, the applicant should provide evidence of right, title or interest in the property.
2. The property owner's name and address, if different from the applicant's, and the owner's signature.
3. The address and the tax map and lot number of the property (these can be obtained at Saco City Hall).
4. The present use and zoning classification of the property (available at City Hall).
5. A brief description of the activity (new construction, reconstruction, alteration, maintenance, demolition or removal) requiring a COA.
6. A scale drawing (or drawings) showing the design, texture and location of any proposed alterations or new construction to the exterior of the structure. The drawings should include plans and exterior elevations drawn to scale. The drawings should include enough detail to depict the architectural design, materials, and textures of the exterior. Drawings do not need to be professionally prepared, but should be clear, complete and specific.
7. Samples of exterior materials used in the project.
8. Photographs of the building(s) involved and of adjacent buildings.
9. A site plan indicating improvements affecting appearance such as walls, walks, terraces, plantings, accessory buildings, signs, lights and other elements.

The Saco Historic Preservation Commission provides an application form, available in the Planning Department at Saco City Hall. The application is also available on the City's website: www.sacomaine.org/archives/forms/historicapp.pdf.

The hearing: At the hearing, the chairperson calls the meeting to order and introduces the members and associate members of the Commission. He or she then asks the applicant to describe his or her project. The chairperson then asks the members and associates if they have any questions about the project; if so, they ask any questions they may have. Members and associates may also share concerns they have about the project at this time. A member of the City of Saco's Planning Department records the meeting.

The outcome: The Commission usually approves or denies an application in two separate votes. The first vote is to make findings of fact. The second vote is on the Certificate of Appropriateness, based on the findings of fact. The Commission has fifteen days following the hearing to approve the application;

Standards of Evaluation:
The guidelines the Saco Historic Preservation Commission uses to assess applications for a COA, as outlined in the Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance. They are based on the U. S. "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation" and are discussed in detail in the next section of this manual.

approve the application with modifications; recommend modifications to the application; or deny the application. The review period can be extended by mutual written agreement between the Commission and the applicant.

Approval: Three members of the Commission must vote in the affirmative for a project to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness. If the Commission finds that the application meets the Standards of Evaluation detailed in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, it will grant a COA. The City Planning office will then notify the applicant and the Code Enforcement Officer in writing of their determination and any conditions of the approval.

Disapproval: If the Commission finds that the application does not meet the Standards of Evaluation, it will prepare a written statement of their findings about how the application fell short of the Standards of Evaluation. The Commission may postpone the decision up to two weeks to prepare a more detailed statement of its findings.

The Appeals Process: If the applicant does not agree with the Commission's decision, he or she can appeal the decision to the Zoning Board of Appeals within thirty days from the date of the decision.

Time Limits on Certificates of Appropriateness: If an applicant receives a COA but does not make a substantial start on construction within six months of receiving the COA, it will become null and void. The Saco Planning Department may extend the deadline for one additional six-month period if the applicant submits a written request. The extension will be approved unless the additional information about the project reveals that it does not meet the Standards of Evaluation; the applicant failed to meet a condition of approval for the project; or an amendment to the ordinance prohibits or alters the proposed project.

PART 2: Standards of Evaluation: How Projects are Assessed by the Saco Historic Preservation Commission

“Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural value.”

National Park Service

The Saco Historic Preservation Commission reviews applications for proposed changes to the exterior of historic buildings according to the “Standards of Evaluation,” “Visual Compatibility Factors,” “Construction of New Buildings and Structures in Historic Districts,” “Signs” and “Demolition or Removal” outlined in the Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance. The “Standards of Evaluation” are based on the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation*.

The *Standards for Rehabilitation* are national standards that allow alterations to older buildings to make them suitable for contemporary life while preserving their architectural character. Local historic preservation commissions use the *Standards for Rehabilitation* as the basis for the review of historic properties across the country. In addition, the National Park Service uses the *Standards for Rehabilitation* to evaluate projects for federal rehabilitation tax credits and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission uses the *Standards* to assess projects for state rehabilitation tax credits.

Saco’s “Standards of Evaluation” and the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation* provide a framework for approaching any rehabilitation project. The Standards are just that—standards or benchmarks to use when planning a historic rehabilitation project. The overall goal of the *Standards* is to retain the historic character of the property or district by minimizing changes to its distinguishing materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships. After identifying a property’s character-defining features, it is important to determine the best way to preserve and protect those features.

The next chapter of this guide, “Guidelines for Maintaining Saco’s Historic Character,” provides a concrete process for determining how to protect a historic property’s character-defining features. It is important to keep in mind that the Saco Historic Preservation Commission reviews every application for a Certificate of Appropriateness on an individual basis. Every property and project is unique and needs to be evaluated on its own merits. If it is located within a historic district, it also needs to be evaluated for how it affects the district as a whole.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The Standards of Evaluation in the Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance cover alterations to historic buildings and properties in the historic district. Each standard from the Ordinance is listed below in italics, followed by an explanation and examples.

Saco's Standards of Evaluation

1. *A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*

All buildings were designed for a specific purpose. If a building cannot continue to serve its initial function, it should be used for a compatible purpose that requires as few alterations to its defining characteristics as possible. Any exterior alterations made to a building or site should preserve those features that give it its character, such as the symmetry of a Federal house, the height and massing of a commercial block, or the historically-important landscape features of a property such as those at Thornton Academy. The Commission will also evaluate proposals that changes in use may require, such as off-site parking and fire escapes.



The York Institute, now the Saco Museum, was built as a museum in 1926, designed by the noted Maine architect John Calvin Stevens. It continues to serve as a museum.



Joseph G. Deering built this Italianate mansion for his family in 1869. In 1955, the Deering Family donated it for use as a public library. Even though it has a new use, it retains its distinctive architectural features. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

This early twentieth-century opera house was converted into a religious venue in the late twentieth century. The inappropriate use of this building, along with poor maintenance and insensitive renovations to doors, windows and marquee, made this Main Street landmark into an eyesore. Fortunately the building has since been returned to its original use and its façade has been rehabilitated (inset). Photograph courtesy of Bangor Daily News.



2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*

The historic character of buildings results from their distinctive spaces, features, and materials. The basic size and shape of the building, its roof, openings in the exterior walls (such as windows and doors), projections or recesses, trim, materials, craft details, and its site can contribute to the building's character. An architectural style is the result of a combination of these distinguishing elements. When such features are destroyed through removal, neglect, or insensitive treatment, the historic character of the building may be lost, and the building will lose its integrity.

The first step to take when planning a rehabilitation project is to identify the character-defining features of the building, so those features can be preserved and the historic character of the building retained.

- The **size and shape** of a building are distinctive features, including its symmetry or asymmetry, and how different shapes of a building fit together, such as wings or ells.



These two buildings on the Thornton Academy campus are good examples of how size and shape can be important design characteristics. The Thornton Library on the left is a one-story, symmetrical, rectilinear building. The Gymnasium on the right, by contrast, is a large, asymmetrical building with many ells and towers, creating an irregular footprint. Photograph courtesy the Dyer Library Archives/Saco Museum.



The distinctive shape of this American Foursquare is obscured by the enclosure of the porch and the addition of a second story to the porch. (See inset photo below for an example of an unaltered American Foursquare.)



- The building's **roof**, including its shape, materials, and features, such as chimneys, dormers, or weather vanes, can also contribute to the historic character of a building.

The cupola, with its louvered panels and weathervane, and other roof features such as slate shingles and denticulated cornice all contribute to the distinctive architectural character of the Dyer Library.





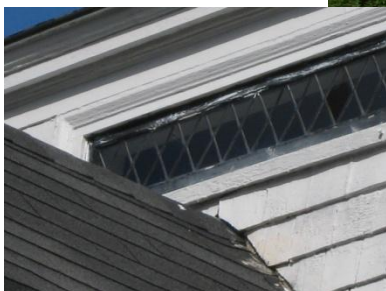
The slate mansard roof is one of the most distinguishing features of this house. However, the roof is in disrepair and could eventually lead to the damage of the building.

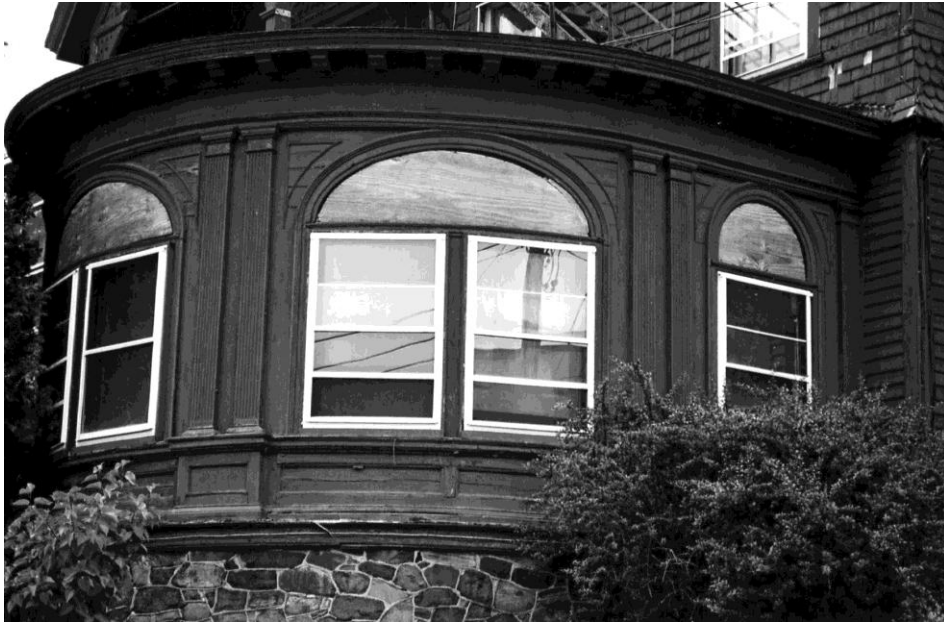
Fenestration:

The pattern of doors and windows and other openings in a building's elevation.

- The **openings** in the exterior of the building, including windows and doors and the fenestration of the façade are often character-defining features of a building. Distinguishing features of windows may include their type (casement, single-hung, double-hung, sliding, picture, etc.), their elements (frame, sash, muntins, glazing, sills), and their material. Distinguishing features of doors include their type (divided door, Dutch door, paneled door, French door, etc.), their elements (panel, muntin, stile, etc.), the door surround (decorative elements around a doorway), and lights (windows), either in the door or surrounding it. The hardware on windows and doors can also be character-defining.

The unique diamond-pane light over the pediment (see inset photo), the six-over-six sash, the columned pediment over the entryway, and the medallion in the pediment are all character-defining features of this Main Street residence.





The boarded-up semi-circular openings above the windows were formerly filled with stained-glass. Their absence, along with the vinyl replacement windows that do not match the originals, severely diminishes the beauty of this once-grand home.

The door and windows of this Federal house are obscured by the frame addition and the exterior stairway.



- The **projections and recesses** of a building are very often distinctive elements of a building. Projections include porches, cornices, balconies, bay windows, towers, or turrets. Recesses include arcades, open galleries, inset porches, and recessed balconies.



The many projections and recesses on this Main Street house—the tower, the porches, the rear ell, and the balcony—contribute to its historic character.

The inset porch of this house on North Street enhances the historical character of the structure.





This American Foursquare's porch has been removed, leaving it without one of its most important character-defining features.

- The **trim** around windows and doors, on cornices, gables, porches and exterior walls, and railings, shutters, fences and other decorative elements can help to define the historic character of a building.

The trim on the cornice of Saco's Masonic block is very distinctive and a character-defining element of the building and so it should be retained.



Almost all of the original trim has been removed from this building, resulting in a house that has lost its distinctive characteristics and much of its architectural value.



- The **materials** of a building often contribute to its character, both from a distance and up close. Some examples of character-defining material are foundations of field stone or decorative concrete block; exterior wall cladding such as brick, stucco, scalloped wall shingling, cedar shingles, wood clapboards, board and batten siding, or stone work; and roof materials such as slate, clay tiles, or shingles.



The brick used in the Masonic Block contributes to the solid quality of this building. Another exterior wall cladding, such as wooden clapboards or shingles would not have achieved the feeling of strength and power that the brick conveys.



The wooden shingles, brackets, and muntins in the windows are distinctive elements of this Craftsman bungalow on Elm Street.

The applied surfaces to this commercial building—the synthetic siding and vertical wooden boards on the first story of the building to the right—cover or replace the original materials and destroy its historic character. The photograph below shows the building in the 1930s with its original storefronts intact. Historical photograph courtesy of the Bangor Museum & History Center.



- A building's **site** also informs its historic or visual character. A grand mansion once surrounded by large, well-kept grounds would be diminished if other buildings were constructed too closely. A farmhouse would lose much of its essential character if it were no longer framed by farmland and outbuildings. A commercial district comprised of buildings of a similar size would lose its character if a building of a different scale and setback were constructed there.

The site includes the amount of green space surrounding the building; the terrain, such as being located on a hill or near a river; the building's relationship with nearby buildings; and its relationship to other features in the landscape, such as fences, walkways, terracing, plantings, sidewalks, and street furniture like street lamps and benches.



The site of this house on North Street, including the circular driveway, the trees, and the bushes, are significant aspects of its character.

3. *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*

The architectural features of buildings reflect the time period in which they were built and, equally important, how they changed over time. Adding elements that are typical of buildings from another historical period detracts from the authenticity of the building. For example, adding a Queen Anne tower to a Federal-style house or adding Italianate brackets to a Craftsman bungalow would present an inaccurate representation of the building's history.



The Colonial Revival entrance is inappropriate for this mid-nineteenth century commercial block because it gives the building a false sense of historical development. Compare it to the historical photograph at left, ca. 1930s, courtesy of Bangor Museum & History Center. (The entrance is in the far left in the historical photo.)

4. *Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*

Buildings evolve over time as their occupants' needs change and they alter the property to suit their purposes. Sometimes these changes become significant, such as when they provide an indication of the historical development of the building or its community, or they are an important example of an architectural style, material, or method of construction.



The York Bank on Main Street has evidence of three significant periods embodied in its façade: its northern three bays contain elements of its original 1833 construction; its 1896 remodeling in the Colonial Revival style by John Calvin Stevens, with its Ionic pilasters on the second story; and its 1920s addition, which repeated the design to its the south end.

This is an example of an addition that would not need to be retained under this standard. While it does demonstrate the building's brief period as a lodging house (the addition served as the office), this era of the building's use falls outside the building's period of significance, so the addition has not acquired significance in its own right. Further, it obscures the architectural characteristics of the residence and detracts from the historic integrity of the original (and historically significant) building.



5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*

This Standard of Evaluation is similar to Standard 2 (*"The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved."*), but Standard 2 is primarily concerned with the distinguishing features of historic properties and Standard 5 is focused on the property's individual details. Many historically important buildings and historic districts have architectural detail that help define their visual character and are evidence of their period of construction. Changing these elements would diminish the historic integrity of the property. Examples of craft details are recessed mortar joints in a brick wall or circular saw marks on wooden shingles.

The terracotta plaque on the Wardwell Home and the rusticated granite lintels on a nearby building, both on Middle Street, are good examples of craft details that contribute to the character of their respective buildings.



6. *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

This standard lays out a clear procedure for making decisions about deteriorated historic features. If the feature is in a good enough condition to be repaired, it should be repaired. If it is not possible to repair the feature, it should be replaced in-kind; that is, with a feature that is visually similar and made of the same material. If it is not possible to use the same material, then a material that is visually-compatible should be used.

Missing feature:

An element that is completely absent from a property, rather than one that is only partly missing.

If the feature is missing completely, it should be reconstructed, either from old photographs or similar features on the structure. The Dyer Library has easily-accessible collections of historic photographs and postcards of many of Saco's buildings, which may provide an illustration of the feature that needs to be replaced. If it is not feasible to construct the replacement out of the original material, the substitute material should match the original as closely as possible. Missing features should *not* be replaced with conjectural elements or with features from other buildings. If there is no evidence of how the missing feature looked, a new one should be designed to replace it. The new feature should be compatible with the size, scale, material and color of the building, but it should be clearly differentiated from the historic building. This concept is covered in more detail in Part 3 of this manual.

The steeple on this church in Damariscotta was removed to repair it. Repairs do not need to be as dramatic as this to have a significant impact on the character of a building.





The splintered rails of the skirt beneath this porch were repaired, returning the structure to its original appearance.

The base of this porch column was in disrepair, so the owner constructed a new one out of the same material and replaced it, retaining the character of the house.



The original brick foundation of this house needed to be replaced. However, instead of using brick again, the owner decided to use poured concrete, which compromised the integrity of the building.

7. *Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*

Using harsh or abrasive cleansers on historic materials can damage them, so it is important to use gentle agents for cleaning. Sandblasting, in particular, can ruin brick and masonry by wearing away the surface. It can also pit most metals. Harsh chemical agents can also damage historic materials. The National Park Service publishes Preservation Briefs that describe the best way to clean various historic materials; a web address for these briefs is listed in the Resources section of this manual.

8. *Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures must be undertaken.*

Archaeological sites have the potential to reveal important information about the history of a culture or an area. Damaging archaeological resources can result in the loss of irreplaceable pre-historical or historical evidence. If archeological resources are found during a rehabilitation or construction project, even outside of the historic district, work should stop and an archeologist should evaluate the site. It may be appropriate to preserve the archeological site in place or document and recover the archeological material. If human remains are found, work should stop immediately and state and local officials should be notified.

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the historic property and its environment.*

This Standard grew out of the recognition that if historic properties are to remain vibrant, change will likely occur, and that the property will retain its value if its historic aspects are protected. If a property owner plans an addition to his or her historic property, it should be designed so that it accomplishes three goals: it should not damage the original building's historic fabric; it should be compatible with the original structure; and it should be distinguishable from the original building. Therefore,

the property owner needs to ensure that distinctive historic features of the original building are protected and not obscured by the new addition. It should also be compatible with the original building in terms of its massing, size, scale, setback, rhythm and proportion. The new construction should also be easily distinguishable from the old. That is, a casual observer should be able to easily tell that the addition is a later construction. The new construction should never be designed to look as though it was built in an earlier time period in an attempt to “blend in” with the original construction. The new construction should be secondary to the original building and as unobtrusive as possible. It is generally preferable to build new additions to the rear of the original building or structure so it does not eclipse the original’s façade. (New additions to historic buildings will be covered in detail in Part 3, “Guidelines for Maintaining Saco’s Historic Character.”)

The addition to the Masonic Block in Saco is a good example of a contemporary design, because it is compatible with, yet distinguishable from, the older portion of the building. Its massing echoes the original building but is subservient to it. The rhythm and scale of its tall, slender windows are similar to the tall, slender windows of the Masonic Block, but they are clearly contemporary rather than historic. Moreover, the addition is to the rear of the building, so it does not detract from the Masonic Block’s primary, Main Street façade.



10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The Secretary of Interior’s Standard on which this is based is sometimes called the “Principle of Reversibility,” which means that if any alteration made to a structure is removed in the future, the building could revert to its form before the change was made. It is very important to ensure that the historic property’s distinguishing features and its historic fabric are not

damaged in making the change. One example is to drill holes in mortar rather than brick, because the mortar can be filled in, but drilling holes in brick ruins them. In order for the historic property to retain its essential form, it cannot be compromised by demolishing its character-defining features to make way for new alterations or additions. Also, the new alterations should not obscure the primary elevation(s) of the original building; any changes should be made to less significant sides of the building or to its rear, where it is less likely to have character-defining features.



The Wardwell Gardens, an addition to the Wardwell Home, an assisted living facility, preserves the original building if it were removed in the future, because it is placed at the rear of the facility, because it does not destroy the character-defining features on the building's primary facades. The placement of the addition also preserves the facility's setting, as it retains the lawn area to the southwest of the original building.

In addition to codifying the Standards of Evaluation, the Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance requires that historic rehabilitation projects follow ten “Visual Compatibility Factors,” which are explained below.

Visual Compatibility Factors

New construction in a historic district should be visually related to the surrounding structures in the district and new additions or alterations to a historic building should be visually related to the original building. The following factors should be considered:

Height: New construction should be a similar height as surrounding buildings. It should not tower over nor dwarf other buildings in the area.

Width: The width of new construction should visually relate to the surrounding buildings.

Windows and doors: The fenestration pattern of a historic building should remain compatible with the fenestration pattern of buildings to which it is visually related, especially if it is adjacent to buildings of the same period.

Relation of solids to voids in front facades: The relationship of solids—the exterior material of a building—to voids—the gaps in the material in a building, usually windows and doors—in the front facades of buildings should be compatible with buildings to which it is visually related.

Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets: The relationship of spaces between buildings on a street should be retained when constructing new buildings or additions.

Rhythm of entrances and/or porch projections: The relationship of entrance and/or porch projections to the sidewalk should be visually compatible with other buildings on the street.

Relationship of materials and texture: The materials and texture used on new construction in a historic district or alterations to an existing building should be compatible with that of the materials used on buildings to which it is visually related.

Roof shapes: The shape of the roof should be compatible with those of visually-related buildings.

Scale of Buildings: The size of the building, along with its building mass in relationship to its window and door openings, porches and balconies, and relationship to open spaces should be compatible with buildings to which it is visually related.

Directional Expression of Front Elevation: The directional character of a building—that is, whether it is primarily oriented vertically or horizontally—should be similar to the buildings to which it is visually related. That is, a tall, thin building should not be constructed on a street of short, wide buildings.

The addition to the Bangor Public Library (to the right of the original building) follows many of the Visual Compatibility Factors. The addition's height, width, scale, roof shape, and directional expression are similar to the original building. The windows of the addition echo those on the original building, both in their shape and in the rhythm of solids to voids, while remaining distinct from the original building. Similarly, the materials and texture of the addition is visually compatible with the original without being identical.



Construction of New Buildings and Structures in Historic Districts

- *In addition to the standards above, the construction of a new building or structure or an addition to an existing building or structure within a historic district or on a historic site shall be generally of such design, form, proportion, mass, configuration, building material, texture, and location on a lot as will be compatible with other buildings in the historic district and with streets and open spaces to which it is visually related and in keeping with the area.*

New construction in a historic district—sometimes referred to as “infill” construction—should be compatible with the historic properties within the district and should observe the context of the district. The standards for new construction or additions to

buildings in historic districts have the same guiding principle as the standards for historic properties: the new construction should not damage the historic district's character-defining features, including important landscape features and open space. In addition, the new construction should follow the Visual Compatibility Standards, which will prevent a new building or addition from destroying the character of the district as a whole. Further, the new construction should not try to mimic earlier historic styles.

New construction should not impinge upon or overpower the historic properties in the district. It should be harmonious in form, proportion, proportions of openings within the façade, mass, texture, and location on the lot. For example, if most buildings along a street in a historic district are two stories tall, the new construction should not be four stories tall, or even one story tall, as it will look out of context with its surroundings. This standard is not meant to curtail contemporary design, but to ensure that it is compatible with the historic district. New construction should be a product of its own time, and should not be designed to look like it was built in an earlier era. Since Saco's Historic District includes both commercial and residential buildings, the Saco Historic Preservation Commission will evaluate each proposal for new construction and new additions on an individual basis.



The First Parish Congregational Church at Main and Beach Streets is a good example of new construction in a historic district. Its form, proportion, and massing recalls a historic New England Church, while its materials and fenestration signify it as a contemporary building.

The church, built to replace the earlier church on this site that was lost to fire, is compatible with the historic district because its height and width are appropriate for a religious structure on a major intersection in the city, yet it does not dominate nearby buildings. The rhythm of solids to voids echoes that of the earlier church. It respects the rhythm of spacing between buildings on Maine Street. Although the ceremonial entrance is now on Beach Street, its Main Street elevation is still its primary façade, in keeping with the other buildings on the street.



Signs

Contemporary signage needs shall be met with signs designed to be consistent with the architectural style of a building, respectful of neighborhood buildings, and carefully designed to fit the façade in the case of attached signs. The design shall take into account the scale, character and design of the building, the traditional location of signage on area buildings, the location of existing sign boards, lower cornices, lintels, and other architectural elements, and the opportunity to use signage as an element to enhance the appearance of building entrances. Materials and workmanship shall convey a sense of permanence and durability.

Signage on a historic property or in a historic district should be compatible with the design of the building. Signs should be harmonious with the historic building rather than detract from it. The Saco Historic Preservation Ordinance provides some standards regarding signage for historic properties.

- *Location:* In general, wall signs should not be higher than the window sill line of the second story. If there is more than one shop in a building, the use of a continuous sign-band that extends over adjacent shops is encouraged. Signs in street-level windows should not obscure visibility through the window.
- *Design:* Signs should be appropriate for pedestrians and slow-moving traffic, so the size of the signs and the letters should be scaled for that audience. Typefaces should be simple and easy to read. Pictographs (a sign in a shape that



A sign on Main Street

conveys a meaning, such as a sign in a shape of a fish for a fish store) can be used if appropriate and consistent with the sign ordinance.

- ***Illumination:*** If signs are lit, the light should be emitted from an exterior, shielded source and the light source should be concealed from direct view. The Commission may approve special illuminated signs (such as marquees or special uses as for cultural events) when the lighting is sensitively-designed.
- ***Special Categories of Signs:***
 - Awnings, Canopies, Marquees: The size and shape needs to correspond with the size, shape and character of the opening they will cover. They need to completely fill the window or door opening.
 - Painted wall signs: Painted wall signs are appropriate as long as they conform to the sign ordinance.
 - Outdoor murals: Painted walls—murals and trompe l’oeil (French, “to deceive the eye”: a two-dimensional depiction that looks three-dimensional, often of architectural features)—cannot be used for advertising, only to enhance the streetscape.

Demolition or Removal of Historic Buildings

In order to demolish or relocate historic buildings or buildings within a historic district, a property owner or agent must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Saco Historic Preservation Commission. In addition to following the regular procedure for acquiring a COA outlined in Part 1, the Commission must find that the application meets one of the following Standards of Approval:

- *It is not a contributing structure in the historic district nor a historic district or site.*
- *The Commission determines that the building or structure, or prominent portions thereof, has been determined by the chief Code Enforcement Officer to represent an immediate hazard to the public health or safety because of severe structural deficiencies, which hazard cannot be abated by reasonable measures.*
- *No prudent or feasible alternative exists, or*
- *The property is deteriorated beyond repair.*

Demolishing or removing a historic building or a contributing building within a historic district should be avoided, as these actions diminish the visual character of the district, and in the case of demolition, cannot be reversed. If the chief Code

Enforcement Officer has determined that the building is a safety or health hazard, or the building is a non-contributing property to a historic district, or too severely deteriorated to be repaired, or no reasonable alternative exists to rehabilitate a building, it may be demolished or removed. In these cases, the Commission may require one or more of the following conditions:

- That the building be recorded, either by photographing, videotaping, or preparing drawings;
- That significant elements are salvaged and measures are taken to preserve them;
- That other actions are undertaken to mitigate the loss of the building.

Because the demolition or removal of a historic building is irrevocable, the Commission may delay issuing a COA for up to 120 days from the date of the hearing to find alternatives for the building, such as helping to find funding to preserve the building; finding other ways to preserve the building; recording the building through photographs or a report; or preserving historic artifacts.

PART 3: GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING SACO's HISTORIC CHARACTER

Saco's neighborhoods blend a wide variety of historic buildings that help to create the city's distinctive sense of place. The guidelines in this chapter will help property owners and residents protect Saco's historic buildings while still allowing for sensitive alterations.

*North Street,
Saco. Undated
photograph
courtesy of the
Dyer Library
Archives/Saco
Museum.*



These guidelines are based on the United States Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* and the City of Saco's "Standards of Evaluation," in Saco's Historic Preservation Ordinance. These Standards should inform the decision-making process when approaching a rehabilitation project, but since every project is unique, some Standards will apply more than others. Moreover, a property owner or manager needs to assess the property as a whole and will necessarily have to balance the needs of one part of the project against the needs of another part of the project in making decisions about how to proceed.

The guidelines outline a process used to steer a property owner or manager through the decisions he or she will make when planning the rehabilitation project. Keep in mind that

the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* and Saco's Historic Preservation Ordinance allow for adaptations for new uses as long as character-defining features are not diminished. The process outlined in these guidelines is designed to help the property owner or manager make alterations to their historic property that meets their needs while also preserving the historic character of the building, its site, and the historic district as a whole.

In general, these guidelines follow a consistent hierarchy. That is, the first thing to do is to **identify the character-defining features** of the historic property. Because this step is crucial in planning a rehabilitation project, the guidelines are organized around the various character-defining elements that were discussed in Part 2. The next steps follow a process of engaging in the least intervention possible to the greatest, depending on the severity of deterioration of the feature. Therefore, the next thing to do is to **retain** and **preserve** the historic elements of the building and its landscape to the degree that is possible. Preserving character-defining features includes making sure they are visible, so it can involve removing material that obscures the feature.

Throughout this process it is necessary to **protect** and **maintain** the historic property, especially before the project begins. Of course, it is also important to maintain the property after the rehabilitation work is complete.

In-kind: Match the new feature to the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials.

Naturally, features of the historic property may have fallen into disrepair, either through neglect, weathering, or damage. If that is the case, those elements should be **repaired** rather than replaced if technically and economically feasible. Repair can involve limited replacement; that is, replacing the missing piece with an identical replacement piece. Any kind of replacement involves a hierarchy of its own. The most desirable solution when conducting a repair is to use the same kind of material as the original. If that is not possible, using a substitute material is acceptable as long as the material is visually similar to the remaining material. Of course, the replacement piece must match to remaining pieces in design, size, and color—it should appear the same as the original pieces.

There are times when an entire character-defining feature is beyond repair, so it needs to be **replaced**. In that case, if the basic structure and detailing of the deteriorated piece is still apparent, then it can be used as a model on which to reconstruct the replacement piece. It is preferable to use in-kind material, but if that is not possible, a visually-compatible substitute material may be used. It is important to keep in mind that replacement of an entire feature is an acceptable strategy for rehabilitation only if it is not possible to repair the original. The replacement should match the original in size, scale, and detailing.

If a property owner decides to replace a **missing historical feature**, he or she should

proceed very carefully. The first step is to locate evidence about what the feature looked like. This documentation can be physical (some remains of the missing feature), pictorial (historic photographs), or historic (a detailed historical account of the missing feature). These types of documentation may be used to create a reproduction of the missing feature, but they need



If the Federal Government decides to alter the Saco Post Office, it should consult this historic photograph to determine its historical appearance. Post card courtesy of Peter Morelli.

to be used with care. For example, a past owner of the historic structure may have added an incongruous feature that has since been removed. In that instance, it would *not* be desirable to use that photograph as “proof” of what “should” be done to the building. The key thing to remember is that whatever changes are made to the building should be visually compatible with its historic character. It is often best to hire a design professional with experience in historic preservation for these types of projects. As with replacing historic features, it is preferable to use an in-kind material. If that is not possible due to the material’s availability or economic or technical constraints, then a substitute material may be used, as long as it is visually compatible with the original material.

If there is no way to determine what the missing feature looked like, then the next step is to design a feature that is compatible with the character of the building. The feature should be visually-compatible with the size, scale, material

*Conjectural
Features:*

Elements that are added to a building that do not have a historical basis; a feature based on speculation or imagination.

*False Historical
Appearance:*

Creating an inaccurate representation of historic styles by adding inaccurate features to a building.

and color of the historic building, but it should also be *clearly differentiated* from the building. That is, it should be obvious that the new feature was *not* a part of the original building, but is a new element entirely. A property owner or developer should not try to recreate a historical feature that does not have any basis in fact. Using conjectural elements (such as copies of features from surrounding buildings) can create a false historical appearance. That is, putting an “old looking” feature on a historical building could mislead people into thinking the building has always looked that way. The property owner should seriously consider hiring a design professional with experience in preservation before starting on such a project.

If a new use for the historic building requires the construction of an **addition**, the process for making decisions about how to build are very similar to making alterations to the existing building. The main concern is to not destroy or obscure character-defining features of the original building and to make sure that any new construction is clearly differentiated from the historic construction. This is most easily done by constructing additions to the rear of the historic property, where they are less likely to affect the building’s character-defining features and less visible from the public right-of-way. Additions to roofs should be set back from the original roof line, both to keep it from impinging on the historic viewscape and to ensure that it is visibly different from the historic elevations of the building. New construction in the historic district follows a similar logic: it should not conflict with the existing historic buildings in size or scale, or with the rhythm of buildings and spaces in the district.

Keep in mind that every project is unique and the Saco Historic Preservation Commission’s decisions about granting a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) will need to be made on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, different properties may rely more heavily on one or more of the guidelines than others, depending on the project. So, while one project may specify a new addition, another may require work on the historic wooden windows—each project would, in turn, draw on different guidelines. There is necessarily some overlap among the guidelines. If a property owner wants to repair a slate roof, for example, he or she would turn to the guidelines regarding how to treat historic masonry and the guidelines regarding how to treat roofs. The most important

aspect of the guidelines is that it is a consistent *process* that one uses when planning a rehabilitation project.

The National Park Service publishes a series of Preservation Briefs, which discuss in detail a number of topics addressed by the guidelines (e.g., how to repoint mortar joints in a historic building). The Resources section covers how to find Preservation Briefs.

While the Commission only reviews buildings in Saco's historic district, it is a good idea for any historic house owner to follow the Guidelines for Rehabilitating Buildings in order to protect his or her investment.

While the ordinance and these guidelines apply to *contributing* and *non-contributing* buildings in a historic district, non-contributing buildings are not subject to the same level of scrutiny as contributing buildings. The ordinance requires review of changes made to non-contributing buildings in a historic district because they could negatively affect the appearance of the district. For instance, adding an extra story to a two-story non-contributing house in a residential part of a historic district characterized by two-story buildings most likely will not be allowed because of its impact on the rest of the district.

The following guidelines pertain to obtaining a request for a COA and the hierarchy of treatment that members of the Commission will use in evaluating proposals for a project in the historic district.



Main Street at the corner of Storer Street. Undated Photograph courtesy of Dyer Library Archives/Saco Museum.

Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

Building Function

- ✓ Historic buildings should be used for their original purpose whenever possible.
- ✓ When a building is not be used for its original purpose, the building should be used for a compatible purpose that requires as little change as possible to the exterior of the building and its site as seen from the road.



This former high school on Spring Street in Saco has been converted into apartments. This is a good compatible use, because the exterior has not been altered much, and the building still reads as a school. The school, built in 1871-72, was listed on the National Register in 1983.

Size, shape and balance

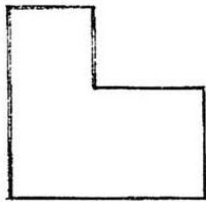
- ✓ **Size.** Buildings in the historic district should remain their current size as seen from the street.
- ✓ Additional stories should only be added when they are required for a new use. If additional stories are added, they should be as inconspicuous as possible. This is often achieved by setting them back from the front of the building.
- ✓ The size of a building should not be changed by removing a story.



The extra story on this mid-twentieth house changes its size. Even though the addition is set back from the façade, it changes the historic character of the house.

- ✓ **Shape.** Alterations to the footprint of a contributing building in a historic district should not change its appearance as seen from the street.
- ✓ New additions should be constructed to the rear of the building, or set back along a side elevation.

Footprint: The size and shape of the mark a building would leave on the ground if it could be lifted off the ground.



- ✓ **Balance.** Balance in a building is achieved by the placement of its features, such as windows, doors, columns, and its projections, such as porches, towers, and bay windows. The balance of a building when viewed from the street should not be disturbed by the addition of new construction or the removal of significant features.



The addition to this meeting house in New Gloucester is appropriately placed at the rear of the building.



This is one of the Jacobs Houses on Elm Street (ca. 1820). It is a vertically symmetrical building—each half of the house is nearly identical. It is on the National Register.

This Main Street house is asymmetrical. Its porch, bay window, and irregular form provide balance to each other.



Roofs

- ✓ Radically altering a roof's shape should be avoided, particularly those sections that can be seen from the public right-of-way. This includes changing the configuration of the roof line by adding features such as dormers, vents, solar panels or skylights in a way that would diminish the character of the building.
- ✓ Decorative and functional roof features should be identified and retained, such as chimneys, cupolas and weathervanes.



The alteration of this roof's shape has negatively affected the character of this early twentieth-century house and its surrounding neighborhood.

- ✓ Identify, retain and preserve the building's historic roofing materials. These can include slate, wood, and metal. The size, color, and patterning of the material should also be preserved. Retain and reuse as much of the roof covering as possible. For example, if only the roofing substrate needs to be replaced, it is preferable that the roof material (such as slate or tile) be reused.
- ✓ Do not remove sound historic material from a roof for the purpose of replacing it with material that is not compatible with the building. For example, it is not acceptable to remove intact slate shingles from a historic building and replace them with a tin roof.
- ✓ Roofing material that has been historically unpainted or treated with other coatings should not be painted or have other coating applied.



The slate shingles on the sides of the dormers on the Old Dyer Library on Main Street help to preserve the building's historic character.

- ✓ The roof's materials and features should be protected and maintained so that they remain in good condition for as long as possible. Gutters and downspouts should be cleaned and maintained regularly to ensure that the roof's fasteners, sheathing, and underlying structure remain in good condition. Leaks should be covered as soon as possible until they can be properly repaired.

- ✓ Repair portions of the roof if possible before replacing the entire roof, including the roof's materials and features such as dormers and cupolas. For example, if slate shingles are missing from the roof, they should be replaced. Portions of deteriorated features can be replaced with an in-kind material or one that is visually compatible, such as filling in parts of a wooden window on a dormer with a wood replacement.

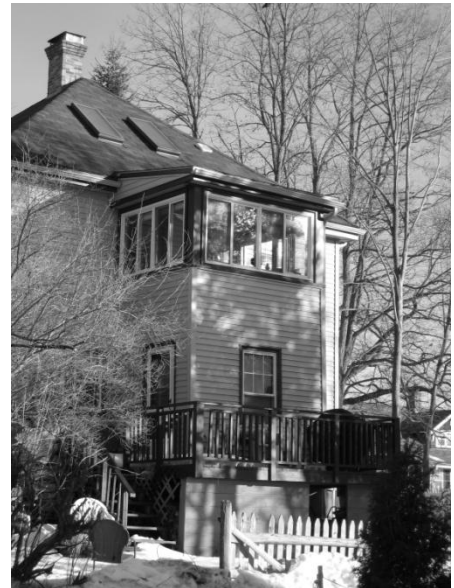
- ✓ If the entire roof needs to be replaced, it is best to use the original, character-defining material. If it is not technically or economically feasible to use the same type of material, then a substitute material that is visually-compatible with the original should be used.

- ✓ If a roof feature such as a chimney or dormer is too deteriorated to repair, then it should be replaced using the physical evidence of the original as a guide. The original material should be used—if that is not possible, a visually-compatible substitute can be used. It is not acceptable to remove a roof feature and not replace it, or to replace it with a feature that conveys a different visual appearance.



The tower on this house was repaired using a synthetic material that was visually incompatible with the original. Combined with the same synthetic siding on the rest of the house, the enclosed porch, and the inappropriate front window, it has diminished the character of this early twentieth-century dwelling.

- ✓ If a roof feature is completely missing, it is recommended that it be replaced. If historical, pictorial, or physical documentation exists, an accurate restoration can be created. If accurate documentation does not exist, a new design can be used. The new design should be compatible with the size, scale, material, and color of the historic building.
- ✓ Rooftop additions—either extra space, decks and terraces, or dormers and skylights—should be placed so they are as inconspicuous from the street as possible.
- ✓ If an alteration or addition is needed that requires new mechanical or service equipment such as air conditioners, it is acceptable to place them on the roof so they are not visible from the public right-of-way and they do not damage character-defining features.



The skylights on this roof were appropriately installed to the rear of the house.

Windows

- ✓ Identify, retain, and preserve windows and their features that contribute to the historic character of a building. Window features include frame, sash, muntins, glazing, decorative hoods, and shutters.
- ✓ Avoid removing historic materials of windows or obscuring windows or window trim with poorly-fitting storm windows or with synthetic siding or other materials.



The nine-over-six windows on the Abraham Foskel House on Cross Street are important elements in helping this Georgian dwelling retain its early nineteenth-century character.

- ✓ Avoid changing the fenestration pattern of the building by removing or blocking in character-defining windows or by cutting new openings in the building to create new windows, especially on the building's facade.

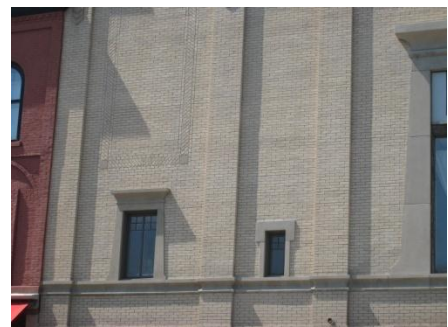


The fenestration pattern of this building has been changed by the insertion of a picture window on the first story, as well as the too-small door, which are both inappropriate for the time period of this building.

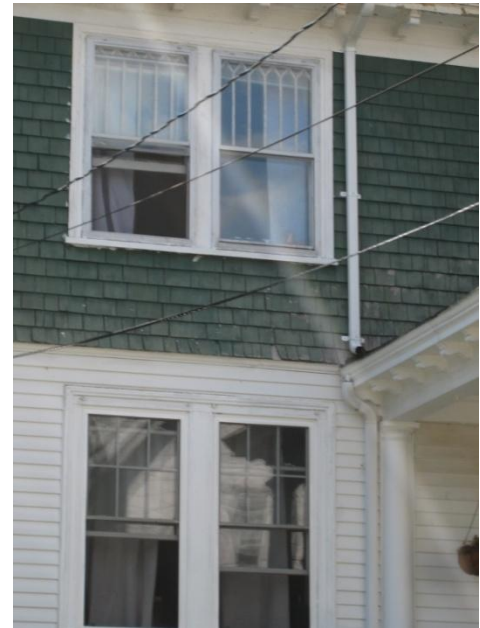
- ✓ Windows should receive regular cleaning and maintenance to keep them in good condition for as long as possible.
- ✓ Repair windows, including window trim, shutters, hardware, and window components, to the extent that it is technically and economically feasible. Repairing windows can include patching, splicing, consolidating or reinforcing the component parts of the windows.
- ✓ Replace missing pieces with in-kind material if possible. If the in-kind material is not available, or it is not economically or technically feasible to use the original material, replace missing pieces with a visually-compatible substitute material. Reuse existing window hardware such as brass sash locks where possible.



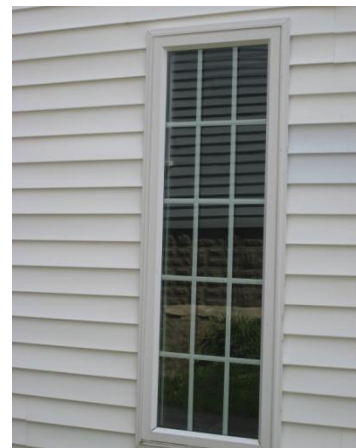
If this window and its surround were allowed to deteriorate further, it would eventually have to be replaced, resulting in either unnecessary expense or the loss of architectural character. The original frame and sash were repaired, while the cast concrete trim around the window was replaced in-kind. The window to the left in the photograph below is the rehabilitated window.



- ✓ Do not replace an entire window when it is possible to repair it and replace limited sections of it.
- ✓ If a window (or window trim or shutters) is deteriorated beyond repair, then it is permissible to replace it with a new one, using the existing window as a model.
- ✓ The new window should duplicate the configuration of window panes in the frame, the frame width, glass-to-frame ratio, and other significant components of the window.
- ✓ If the historic window trim or shutters are too deteriorated to repair, they should be duplicated using the deteriorated feature as a model for color, size, shape and detailing. It is best to use the same type of material as used on the original, but if that is not possible, a substitute material should be used that is visually compatible.
- ✓ A character-defining window should not be replaced with a new window that conveys a different visual appearance.
- ✓ If a window (or window trim or window shutters) is completely missing, a new window should be designed for the opening. If other historical windows, window trim, or shutters are intact on the same elevation of the building, the new window can be duplicated from those. Otherwise, the new window, window trim, or shutters can be designed by carefully consulting historic photographs and other historic and physical documentation.



The decorative detailing that characterizes this early twentieth-century American Foursquare, seen in the upper window, was lost when the owners replaced the lower window with a visually-incompatible replacement window.

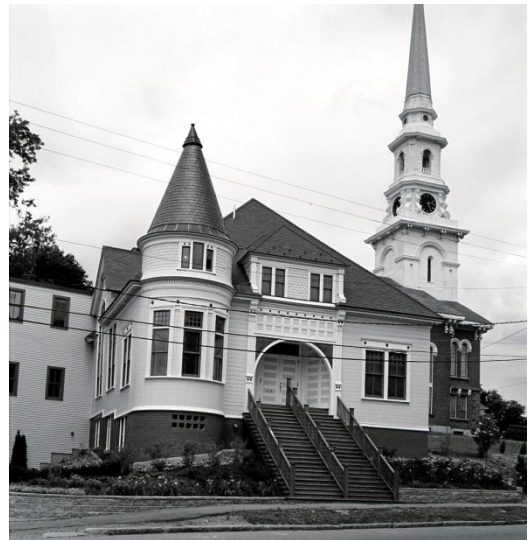


This vinyl replacement window lacks the muntin profile of the original wood window, so it conveys a much different visual appearance than its historic counterpart. Either repairing the original or replacing with a visually-similar window would have helped retain the character of the building.

- ✓ If possible, use the same materials in the reproduction window as were used in the original. If the materials are not available, or it is technically or economically unfeasible, then substitute materials can be used as long as they are visually compatible with the original.
- ✓ If it is not possible to find adequate pictorial, written, or physical documentation to replace a missing window, then it is acceptable to use a completely new design for the window. The new design should be compatible with the size of the window opening and the scale, materials, and color of the historic building.
- ✓ When altering or adding to a historic building for a new use, install new windows in such a way that is sensitive to the character-defining features of the building.
- ✓ It is best to install new windows required for the new use on the rear of the building or towards the rear of the side elevations. The new windows should be compatible with the size, scale, materials, and color of the historic building, but they should not duplicate the detailing or fenestration pattern of the original building.
- ✓ If the interior of the new use in the historic building interferes with the appearance of the windows from the exterior, changes should be made to the interior to mitigate that effect, such as providing a setback for any dropped ceilings to allow for the full height of window openings.
- ✓ Do not install new floors, ceilings, or walls that cut across the glazed areas of windows so that the appearance of character-defining windows are altered.



The replacement windows on the left side of the door on the elevation of this Gothic Revival house are out of scale with the building and from a much later time period, thereby contributing to its loss of architectural character.



This former church vestry in Bangor was adapted for use as offices for a bank. The fenestration pattern of the connector to the bank building next door employs a completely different fenestration pattern and window configuration than in the original vestry windows.

Entrances and Porches

- ✓ Identify, retain and preserve the elements of entrances that help create the historic character of a building, including doors, porches, fanlights, sidelights, columns, balustrades, and stairs.
- ✓ Character-defining entrances and porches should not be removed, even if the primary entrance to the building has changed to accommodate a new use.
- ✓ New entrances should not be cut into the façade or any elevation that can be seen from the street, as that would disturb the historic character of the structure.
- ✓ Do not obscure a historic door with an incompatible screen door. If screen doors are used, they should be compatible with the historic character of the building.
- ✓ Utilitarian doors or service entries should not be changed to look like they are formal entrances to the building by adding trim around the door and finishes such as paneling to the door itself.
- ✓ Historic materials, such as wood, brick, tile and iron, should not be removed from entrances and porches.
- ✓ Protect and maintain historic entrances and porches to keep them in good condition for as long as possible.
- ✓ Repair entrances and porches when necessary, including the door, its hardware, the trim surrounding the entry, and the columns, balustrade, stairs and floor of the porch. Repair can include limited



The porch and front entry—including the posts, the balustrade, the scrollwork and the cornice—are character-defining elements of the A.B. Seavey House (1890) on Temple Street. The Seavey House was entered into the National Register in 1978.

replacement of in-kind or visually-similar material.

- ✓ If elements of the entrance or porch—such as cornices, entablatures, sidelights and columns—are deteriorated beyond repair or are missing, the surviving prototypes can be used as a model to create new ones. It is preferable to use the same type of material, but if that is not possible, a visually-compatible material can be used.
- ✓ If an entire entrance or porch is too deteriorated to repair, then it should be replaced with a new one based on the existing entrance or porch.
- ✓ When replacing an entire entrance or porch, the reproduction should match the original in size, scale and detailing, including the door, its trim, and hardware, including any glazing in the door or door surround, such as fanlights or sidelights. The door should fit well into the door opening. The porch elements, including the balustrade, columns, cornice and entablature, should also match the original.
- ✓ If possible, it is best to use the original materials for the replacement door, such as brass hinges for a door that historically had brass hinges. If it is not technically or economically feasible to use the historic materials, then substitute materials may be used, as long as they are visually compatible with the building.
- ✓ It is not acceptable to remove an entrance or porch and replace it with a new one that conveys a different appearance.



*A well-maintained entrance on
Main Street*

- ✓ When an entire entrance or porch is missing, it should be replaced with a new entrance or porch.
 - ✓ If possible, the design for the new entrance or porch should be based on historical evidence of the entrance or porch, such as historic photographs, a historic account, or physical evidence.
 - ✓ If no pictorial, documentary, or physical evidence exists, it is acceptable to design an entirely new entrance or porch, as long as it is visually-compatible with the historic building. The new design should be in keeping with the scale, material, and color of the historic building
 - ✓ Avoid creating a false sense of history by using conjecture to come up with a design for the new entrance or porch.
-
- ✓ A new use of a historic building often requires different entrances. They should be designed sensitively to preserve the historic character of the building. Limit the new entrances to the rear portions of the building, where they cannot be seen from the public right-of-way.
 - ✓ If a porch needs to be enclosed for a new use of the building, it should be done in such a way that it retains the building's character-defining features. It is better to use large sheets of glass behind existing scrollwork, posts and balustrades rather than solid materials such as wood or masonry.



The original entrance to this late nineteenth-century house was removed and replaced with a porch and entry that are not compatible with the design of the house.



A poorly-designed enclosed porch

Historic Exterior Material: Wood

- ✓ Identify, retain, and preserve character-defining wooden features, whether they are structural, functional or decorative.
- ✓ Avoid obscuring historic wooden cladding-- such as clapboards or shingles-- and features—such as cornices, window hoods, and door surrounds--with applied synthetic siding.
- ✓ The type of covering and finish historically applied to wood should not be radically changed. For example, if the cornice topping a historic porch was painted, it should not be stripped of the paint to achieve a “natural” look. Similarly, if the cedar shakes on a Shingle-style house were stained historically, the stain should not be painted over.
- ✓ Protect and maintain wood elements on historic buildings. Identify and treat conditions that cause wood deterioration, such as standing water, leaking gutters, and faulty flashing.
- ✓ Retain paint and other coatings to protect the wood. Remove deteriorating paint using the gentlest means possible. Scrape and sand paint by hand to remove it as much as possible. Be very careful when using thermal devices, such as electric hot-air guns and electric heat plates, and chemical strippers. Do not use propane or butane torches, sandblasting or high water pressure devices to remove paint, as these methods can irreversibly damage woodwork.



The ornate wooden hood over the door is one of the character-defining features of this Italianate house on Main Street.



A wooden gutter that needs to be repainted. Keeping gutters free of debris helps to protect and maintain wooden features on historic buildings.

- ✓ Deteriorating wood features that help define the building should be repaired to the extent possible. Repair can include patching, piecing-in, and reinforcing the wood.
- ✓ Repair can include limited replacement in-kind (or with a compatible material) where parts of features are severely deteriorated or missing and there are surviving prototypes, as in cornices, dentils or missing shingles.
- ✓ It is not appropriate to replace an entire feature when it can be repaired or only limited sections of the feature need to be replaced.
- ✓ If a wooden feature of the historic building is beyond repair, it can be replaced using surviving features on which to base the new design. For example, if a wooden column is missing, a new column can be constructed using any surviving columns as prototypes. The wooden feature should be as close as possible to the prototype, including its size, scale and detailing.
- ✓ Ideally, wood should be used to construct the replacement feature. If it is economically or technically impossible to use wood, a substitute material, such as a wood composite, is acceptable.
- ✓ If a character-defining wooden feature is entirely missing from the building, it should be replaced. For example, if the cornice of an Italianate house is entirely missing from a historic building, a suitable cornice can be built to replace it.



This garage demonstrates two aspects of preservation guidelines: the wooden shingles on this garage can be easily repaired. The building would have retained more of its architectural integrity if the original door had been repaired; replaced with a design based on the original; or if the replacement used a material (i.e., wood) that was compatible with the garage

- ✓ If historic evidence—whether pictorial, archival, or physical—exists that depicts what the missing piece looked like, it should be carefully consulted to make an accurate reproduction of the missing piece. The new feature should ideally be made out of wood. If using wood is not possible, it can be made out of a visually compatible substitute material.
- ✓ If there is insufficient documentary evidence to construct the new feature, a new one should be designed that is compatible with the size, scale, and material of the building. The new feature should be clearly differentiated from the historic building. The new feature should not be based on a wooden feature from another historic era, as it could create an erroneous sense of history.



The original wooden door and front steps of this late-nineteenth century house have been replaced with a contemporary door and steps, giving the building a false historic appearance. Moreover, the exterior stairway to the second story was added, which was not original to the building. While the stairway may be functional, it obscures the materials and features of the house's primary elevation. It would have been more appropriate to add the stairway to the rear of the building.

Historic Exterior Material: Masonry

- ✓ Identify, retain, and preserve character-defining masonry. Character-defining masonry elements, such as cast concrete decorative pieces, should not be removed from the building or site. Character-defining historic masonry elements should not be hidden from view. An example would be a field stone foundation that is completely obscured by new construction.
- ✓ Masonry elements should be coated as they were historically. That is, if they were historically unpainted, they should remain unpainted. If they were coated—such as a brick house that was painted—then the coating should not be removed permanently and it should be maintained properly.



The stone and brick of the Way Way General Store on Buxton Road are character-defining features of the building, which was placed on the National Register in 1995.

- ✓ Masonry materials such as bricks, mortar, concrete, and various types of stone should be protected and maintained. Regular maintenance should be part of an ongoing process.
- ✓ Masonry should be cleaned only when necessary because it is vulnerable to damage by harsh cleaning materials or methods. Any cleaning to be done should use the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting, high-pressure water, and harsh chemicals should be avoided. Any liquid that has the potential to freeze should also be avoided, as it could crack the masonry. All cleaning methods should be tested on a small area of the material to be cleaned.
- ✓ Masonry elements that are in disrepair should be repaired to the degree possible, including the limited replacement of materials. An entire masonry element should not be removed if part of it can be repaired. For example, damaged stucco can be removed and patched with new stucco that matches the original. A substitute material can be used for the replacement part if it conveys the visual appearance as the original.
- ✓ Repoint mortar joints when there is evidence of deterioration: disintegrating mortar, cracks in mortar joints, loose bricks, damp walls, or damaged plaster. Failing mortar should be removed by hand-raking the joints; electric saws and hammers should not be used for this purpose. The old mortar should be duplicated in strength, composition, color, texture, width, and joint profile.



This fieldstone foundation could be easily be repaired by replacing the missing stones with the originals, if they are available, or with new ones that match the original in color and texture.

- ✓ Non-historic surface treatments (such as water-repellant coatings) should only be applied after repointing and only if water penetration problems persist after other strategies have failed. The coating should not change the historic appearance of the masonry.
- ✓ If an entire masonry element is too deteriorated to repair, it is acceptable to replace it, as long as the original element is available to use as a model on which to design the reproduction. It is best to use the same type of material in the replacement, such as using granite to replace a granite lintel. If the original material is not available, or if it is not economically or technically feasible to use the same material, a substitute material may be used, as long as it conveys the same appearance as the original.
- ✓ If a masonry feature is missing entirely from a building, a new feature can be designed to replace it. It is preferable to design the new feature as an accurate reproduction based on historical, pictorial or physical documentation, such as using historic photographs with the missing piece to recreate the feature.
- ✓ If there is no evidence available to use to design an accurate reproduction, an entirely new design can be created that is in keeping with the size, scale, material and color of the historic building.
- ✓ Be very careful not to create a false historic appearance by using inaccurate historical documentation.



The original foundation of this Arts and Crafts house was replaced with concrete instead of a foundation that matched the original, diminishing the architectural character of the building.

Site

- ✓ Identify, retain, and preserve building sites. The building site is the area surrounding the historic building within the property boundaries. It is important to be aware of character-defining features of the site, including circulation systems (paths, walkways and parking); furnishings (lights and fences); landforms (terracing and grading); decorative elements (sculpture or statuary); vegetation (trees and gardens); and outbuildings (garages, barns, and carriage houses).
- ✓ Retain and preserve the character-defining features of the site. Do not make radical alterations to such features, including changing the grade on the property, especially near the building, as it could destroy the character-defining features of the site and building and cause drainage problems.
- ✓ Retain relationships between historic buildings--including outbuildings, landscape features, and open space on the site. For example, do not move outbuildings from one site to another on a complex of buildings such as a farm.
- ✓ Do not install conjectural features or move buildings onto the site, as it could convey a false sense of historical development.
- ✓ Eliminate non-significant buildings or features that diminish the historic character of the site.
- ✓ Protect and maintain the site through regular maintenance, including proper drainage so that water does not erode the foundation or the historic landscape.



The fountain and plantings are important features of the site of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.



The site of this house has not been properly maintained because the trees and bushes have been allowed to become overgrown, interfering with the site lines of the property.

- ✓ Protect possible archeological material of the site by minimizing disturbance of the terrain and surveying the site for archeological materials before embarking on rehabilitation work.
- ✓ Protect the building and site before rehabilitation from vandalism by erecting a fence around the site before work begins.
- ✓ Repair features of the site using historically-accurate materials. Do not replace an entire feature, such as a stone fence, if some of the historic material can be preserved. Repair those portions of the feature that can be preserved, including limited replacement if necessary. If possible, use historic materials to make the repair. If the historic material is not available to make the repair, use one that is visually compatible.
- ✓ If an entire feature is beyond repair, then it can be replaced as long as the overall form and detailing of the original feature are still apparent. The original can then be used as a prototype for the reproduction.
- ✓ The deteriorated feature should be replaced rather than removed from the historic site. The new feature should match the original in size, scale and detailing of the original feature. It is best if the historic material is used in the reproduction. If the historic material cannot be used in replacing the deteriorated feature, then a substitute material can be used, as long as it is visually compatible with the original.

- ✓ If a historic landscape feature is missing entirely, a new one can be designed to take its place. If accurate historical documentation exists, it should be used as evidence to design the new feature. For example, if a gazebo once stood on the site of a historic house, historic photographs that depict the gazebo can be used to design an accurate reproduction. The reproduction gazebo should be placed on its historic spot on the site.
- ✓ It is best if the replacement feature is constructed of its historic material. If the historic material is not available or if it is not economically or technically feasible to use the historic material, then a substitute material may be used.
- ✓ If there is no reliable historic documentation available to use on which to base an accurate reproduction, then a new design for the missing feature may be created as long as it is compatible with the historic character of the building and site in size, scale, and color.
- ✓ It is inappropriate to replace a historical feature based on inadequate historical, pictorial, or physical documentation, or to replace a historical feature based on conjecture (such as copying a feature from another historic property). These would create a false historical appearance.
- ✓ It is inappropriate to establish a new landscape feature or plant material that is not compatible with the site or that interferes with site patterns.
- ✓ A new use for a historic building may create the need for changes on its site. Design new features, such as parking lots and ramps, so they are as inconspicuous as



This single-family house on Elm Street was converted into apartments, requiring a larger parking area. This need was met by placing the parking to the rear of the building.

possible. Placing them to the rear of the building or behind a line of trees to shield them from the sidewalk are good ways to preserve the character-defining features of the site.

- ✓ Design new additions to the historic building in such a way that they are compatible with the historic character of the site and do not alter the historic relationships between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Guidelines for New Construction in Historic districts

The historic district is more than a collection of buildings: it also includes natural landscape features; open spaces such as parks; structures such as fences, light fixtures, public monuments, and statuary; and public facilities such as streets, sidewalks, and curbing. All of these, as well as their relationship to one another, contribute to the character of the historic district.

New construction has the potential to disrupt the buildings and other features of the historic district, but if new buildings are sensitively designed to be compatible with the district's historic structures and spaces, they will not diminish the quality, or character, of the district. Preserving the character of the historic district as a whole involves essentially the same steps as preserving individual buildings: (1) avoid *removing* buildings, structures, landscape features, spaces and their relationships that contribute to the historic district; (2) avoid *obscuring* buildings, structures, landscape features, spaces and their relationships that contribute to the historic district; and (3) *retain* the buildings, structures, landscape features, spaces and their relationships that contribute to the historic district. As with new additions to

historic buildings, new construction in historic districts should be clearly distinguished from historic buildings so it will be recognized as belonging to its own time and place.

- ✓ Identify, retain, and preserve buildings, structures, and landscape material that are important to the character of the historic district.
- ✓ Avoid removing contributing buildings to a historic district if at all possible. See “Demolition or Removal of Historic Buildings” in Part 2 of this manual for additional detail about obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a building in a historic district.
- ✓ Retain the relationship between buildings, as well as the relationship between buildings and landscape features in the historic district when planning for new construction.
- ✓ Avoid obscuring contributing buildings and important landscape features in a historic district when planning for new construction.
- ✓ New construction should be built to the same scale as nearby historic buildings: it should have a similar height and width in its street front elevation as nearby buildings in the historic district. Cornice lines of new construction should relate visually to nearby historic buildings, particularly in tightly-knit streetscapes.
- ✓ New construction should have a similar setback as nearby historic buildings, so as not to obscure their visibility from the public right-of-way.
- ✓ New construction should not be built on historic or archeological sites or on historically-recognized public greenspaces.



Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church on Main Street, built 1993, is a good example of a new construction in a historic district. It fits the scale of the surrounding buildings; it has a similar setback as most of buildings in its immediate vicinity: it does not obscure any historic buildings; and it fits the rhythm of the streetscape. Moreover, it is obviously new construction, so it does not create a false historical appearance.

- ✓ New construction should be of similar volume, or bulk, as nearby historic buildings. That is, new buildings should not consume a greater portion of its lot than is typical of nearby historic buildings. The bulk of a building can be moderated by breaking up its volume into separate parts, which creates “complex massing.” Complex massing reduces the visual impact of a building.
- ✓ The rhythm of the façade of a proposed new building should be compatible with the rhythm of the façade of nearby historic buildings. The rhythm of the façade is determined by the regular spacing of openings (windows and doors) and the relationship of solids (walls) to voids (windows and doors) within the façade of the building.
- ✓ New construction should be clearly differentiated from the surrounding historic buildings. It should “read” as a product of its own time and should not, therefore, be designed to look like it is from an earlier era. It should not create a misleading historical appearance.



This Main Street building was destroyed by fire in the 1990s. Photograph courtesy of Dyer Library Archives/Saco Museum.

RESOURCES

Organizations:

Dyer Library/Saco Museum, 371 Main Street, Saco, Maine, 04072 (207)283-3861. Dyer Library contains local history archives and special collections, including manuscripts, historical papers, maps and an extensive photograph collection. Saco Museum contains fine and decorative arts and historic artifacts. The museum offers permanent and temporary exhibits as well as educational programs. www.sacomuseum.org.

Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 55 Capitol Street, 65 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0065 (207)287-2132. This is the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for the State of Maine. It nominates properties to the National Register of Historic Places; reviews and comments on the effect of federal undertakings on historic properties; assists owners of income-producing properties to obtain federal and state rehabilitation tax credits; oversees the identification and evaluation of archeological sites as well as historic buildings, objects and districts; and promotes historic preservation through planning and public education www.maine.gov/mhpc.

Maine Preservation, 500 Congress Street, Portland, Maine 04101 (207)775-3652. Maine Preservation is a state-wide membership organization providing education and advocacy about historic preservation issues. They have links to a number of resources about preservation on their website www.maine Preservation.org.

Books:

Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1997. A guide to the architectural styles of American houses. Beautiful line drawings illustrate both exterior and interior aspects of styles. Unlike many style guides, it also includes a brief history of styles, putting the evolution of styles into its cultural context

Lee, Antoinette J., ed. *Past Meets Future: Saving America's Historic Environments*. Washington, D. C.: The Preservation Press, 1992. A collection of essays by leaders in the field about many aspects of historic preservation in America.

McAlester, Virginia, and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. An excellent guide to architectural styles of American houses. The authors use line drawings to illustrate the styles and numerous photographs as examples.

Murtagh, William J. *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*. New York: Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 1993. One of the most comprehensive and accessible accounts of the history and theory of the historic preservation movement in America.

Rypkema, Donovan D. *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*. Washington, D. C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994. A concise summary of the many and varied economic benefits of historic preservation.

Publications:

National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1990. The standards and guidelines upon which the Castine Ordinance design standards are based. Available from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the U. S. Government Printing Office or on the web at www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standards/index.htm.

Websites:

National Park Service, "About the Federal Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/brocure1.htm. This site describes the federal tax incentive programs for rehabilitating income-producing historic properties. Available in web-based or PDF formats.

National Park Service, "Electronic Rehab: An Interactive Web Class on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/e-rehab/. This site provides an in-depth look at the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. To examine each of the ten standards individually, click on "enroll now" on the home page, then on "Apply All 10 Standards."

National Park Service, "Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rhb/index.htm. This website provides guidelines for rehabilitating historic buildings, including recommendations for identification of building elements and how to protect, maintain, and repair them, as well what to do if they need to be replaced and how to sensitively alter buildings for a new use.

National Park Service, "Incentives! A Guide to the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program for Income-Producing Properties," United States

Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/incentives/index.htm. This site provides a step-by-step guide to the federal tax incentive programs for rehabilitating income-producing historic properties.

National Park Service, "National Historic Preservation Act: 40th Anniversary," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/history/40th/>.

National Park Service, "National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register, History and Education, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/index.htm>. This site provides an in-depth look at the criteria the National Park Service uses to list a property in the Nation Register for Historic Places. It is useful for property owners and anybody else who is interested in listing a property on the National Register or to understand how the National Park Service determines which properties are eligible.

National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places," U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/index.htm>. This is an informational website about the National Register of Historic Places. It includes information for homeowners as well as a searchable database of National Register properties.

National Park Service, "Preservation Briefs: Celebrating Thirty Years (1975-2005)," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm. This site includes technical information about a variety of preservation issues, such as roofs, windows, or repointing bricks. You can follow the links to individual topics or order hard copies from the National Park Service.

National Park Service, "Rehab Yes/No," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, www.nps.gov/history/hps/rehabyes-no/index.htm. This site contains case studies of rehabilitation projects illustrating the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

National Park Service, "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standards_guidelines.htm. This site explains the four different approaches to treating historic properties and includes links to in-depth websites about those approaches.

National Park Service, "Walk Through Historic Buildings: Learn to Identify the Visual Character of a Historic Building," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/walkthrough/. This National Park Service website provides a step-by-step method for identifying the visual character of historic buildings. It includes a checklist that you can take to a historic building to help you identify its distinguishing features.